

Latin: A Course for Beginners

Course plan

This plan shows the structure of the course and gives an outline of the contents.

Unit 1

This unit looks at:

- the verb: infinitive and base
- formation of 3rd person singular present (indicative active)
- noun and verb in agreement
- simple sentences
- nominative case
- accusative case
- plural forms
- prepositions
- movement 'towards'
- complete present indicative active
- first conjugation
- reference books

Unit 2

This unit looks at:

- possession: genitive case
- position of the genitive
- complement
- second conjugation
- dative case
- method of translating a longer sentence

Unit 3

This unit looks at:

- adverbs
- present indicative active of esse
- position of esse
- vocative case
- ablative case
- ablative case with prepositions
- first declension
- four important facts about nouns
- the base of the noun
- case endings
- gender
- meanings of the ablative
- two exceptions in first declension

Unit 4

This unit looks at:

- the third declension
- case endings of the third declension
- neuter nouns
- the third conjugation
- third conjugation verbs ending in -io
- position of adverbs
- the fourth conjugation
- principal ways of forming the genitive singular in third declension
- gender in the third declension
- the imperative
- the use of inquit
- pronouns
- direct single questions
- abbreviations

Unit 5

This unit looks at:

- second declension
- case endings of the second declension
- neuter nouns of the second declension
- two irregular nouns of the second declension
- the difference between vir and homo
- adjectives
- adjectives of the first class
- agreement of adjectives
- position of adjectives
- perfect tense
- the perfect base
- use of the Vocabulary section
- the perfect tense endings
- esse and posse
- present indicative active of posse
- perfect indicative active of esse and posse
- prolative infinitive
- conjunctions
- some special case usages
- story – *Vulpes et gallus*

Unit 6

This unit looks at:

- revision
- personal pronouns
- possessive adjectives
- is, ea, id – he, she, it
- suus, a, um – his, hers, its, their
- two ways of expressing his, her, its, their
- special use of neuter plural adjectives and pronouns
- sentences and clauses
- relative pronoun and adjectival clauses
- ‘whole’, ‘middle’, ‘top’, etc.
- double direct questions

- partitive genitive
- work on extracts from Latin authors

Unit 7

This topic looks at:

- future indicative active: 1st and 2nd conjugations
- future indicative active: 3rd and 4th conjugations
- future indicative of esse and posse
- imperfect indicative active: 1st and 2nd conjugations
- imperfect indicative active: 3rd and 4th conjugations
- imperfect indicative active of esse and posse
- adjectives of the second class
- more neuter nouns of the third declension
- other facts about third declension nouns
- reflexive pronouns
- the fourth principal part of the verb: the supine
- apposition
- two further examples of special usages of the ablative

Unit 8

This unit looks at:

- future perfect indicative active
- future temporal and conditional clauses
- adverbial clauses of cause, time and condition
- pluperfect indicative active
- contracted forms
- comparison of objectives
- the comparative adjective
- methods of expressing comparison
- the superlative adjective
- adverbs

Unit 9

This unit looks at:

- the ablative of manner
- the accusative of age

- time: how long ago?
- time: how long before, how long after?
- the infinitive as a noun.

This unit will be principally concerned with some special case usages, so that you can have some 'breathing space' for consolidation of previous work.

Unit 10

This unit looks at:

- fourth declension
- fifth declension
- the present subjunctive active
- the present subjunctive active of esse and posse
- imperfect subjunctive active
- imperfect subjunctive active of esse and posse
- some revision points on sentence structure
- adverbial clauses of purpose in Latin
- three methods of expressing 'and'
- sequence of tenses
- points to watch: 'may', 'might'

Unit 11

This unit looks at:

- some independent uses of the subjunctive:
 - jussive subjunctive
 - deliberate subjunctive
 - subjunctive of desire

Unit 12

This unit looks at:

- revision

Sample of the course
Latin: A Course for Beginners

Unit 1

Purpose

In this unit we will be looking at:

- the verb: infinitive and base
- formation of 3rd person singular present (indicative active)
- noun and verb in agreement
- simple sentences
- nominative case
- accusative case
- plural forms
- prepositions
- movement 'towards'
- complete present indicative active
- first conjugation
- reference books.

On the next page are two lists of Latin words which we are going to use in this unit. All these words are in the vocabulary section provided with the course, but to facilitate learning lists of words will be given in the earlier units.

Word list

Nouns	Verbs
pūellā – girl	laudāre – to praise, approve
āgricolā – farmer	spectāre – to look at
pōētā – poet	vōcāre – to call, summon
nautā – sailor	dāre – to give
vaccā – cow	servāre* – to save, protect
bālaenā – whale	exspectāre – to wait for
āvīā – grandmother	sālūtāre – to greet
lūnā – moon	portāre – to carry
stellā – star	stāre – to stand
fossā – ditch	excitāre – to rouse, wake
rīpā – river bank	est – he, she, it, there is
aquā – water	calcāre – to kick, tread underfoot
silvā – wood, forest	vulnerāre – to wound
cāprā – she-goat	cantāre – to sing
cōlumbā – dove	lācrīmāre – to cry, weep
vespā – wasp	mōnstrāre – to show
filīā – daughter	lābōrāre – to work, toil
iānūā – door (janua)	nātāre – to swim
cāsā – cottage	hābitāre – to dwell in, inhabit
muscā – fly	oppugnāre – to attack
rōsā – rose	narrāre – recount, tell
fābūlā – story	aedificāre – to build
pīllā – ball	prōpērāre – to hurry, hasten
portā – gate	libērāre – to release, set free
īnsūlā – island	nāvīgāre – to sail
hastā – spear	saltāre – to dance, leap
sāgittā – arrow	iactāre (jactare) – to throw, fling
fēnestrā – window	ambūlāre – to walk
ēpistolā – letter	amāre – to love, like
pēcūniā – money	
mēnsā – table	*NB servāre does not mean ‘to serve’.
incōlā – inhabitant	This is what’s called a ‘false friend’ – a
vīā – road, way	word that looks like one in your own
lacrimā – tear	language, but the meaning is
gālĕā – helmet	different.
terrā – earth, land, ground	
fēmīnā – woman	

A list of prepositions will be given in the section on prepositions.

The verb: infinitive and base

The form of the verb given in the word list is called the **infinitive** because it expresses the activity of the verb without being confined to person, tense, etc. This is an important part of the verb

because from it is found the **base** on which various **tenses** are built.

It will be noted that all the infinitives end in **-āre** which means that all these verbs belong to the same group. NB **dāre** is an exception.

To find the base of this group of verbs, you remove **-re** from the present **infinitive active**, e.g.

Infinitive	Base
laudāre	laudā-
ambulāre	ambulā-
iactāre (jactare)	iactā-

Activity 1

Find the bases of the following verbs:

1 spectāre 2 dāre 3 lacrimāre 4 stāre 5 aedificāre

Formation of 3rd person singular present indicative active

This tense of the verb is formed by adding **-t** to the base, e.g.

prōpērāt – he, she, it hurries

nātāt – he, she, it swims

portāt – he, she, it carries.

Note:

- The long 'a' of the base is shortened.
- The tense or time is present.
- The mood is indicative stating a fact.
- The voice is active because the subject is doing the action.

There is no separate pronoun indicating the person of the verb. This is shown by the letter **t** – which signifies the 3rd person singular. This is important.

There are three ways of translating this tense.

1 He hurries 2 He does hurry 3 He is hurrying

Activity 2

Translate Latin words into English, and vice versa:

- | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1 vöcät | 2 monsträt | 3 amät | 4 calcät |
| 5 oppugnät | 6 He works | 7 She is sailing | 8 He dances |
| 9 She is weeping | 10 It inhabits | | |

When translating into Latin it is not necessary to mark vowel length.

In translation from a full sentence of Latin it is usually easy to determine whether the subject is he, she or it.

Noun and verb in agreement

Now look at the list of nouns. Notice the following:

- there is no separate article 'the' or 'a'
- they all end in a, which means that they all belong to the same group.

If I wish to say in Latin 'The girl sings' then it is Püellä cantät. I use the third person singular of the verb because the girl is 'she'.

Further examples:

- Bälaenä nätäät – the whale is swimming
- Püellä saltät – the girl dances
- Cölämbä cantät – the dove sings
- Aviä läcřimät – grandmother is weeping
- Ägricolä läböřät – a farmer works

Activity 3

Translate into English:

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1 Nautä nävīgät | 2 Pöētä cantät | 3 Äviä nätäät |
| 4 Ägricolä stät | 5 Cäprä calcät | 6 Vaccä ambulät |
| 7 Vespä vulnerät | 8 Fēmīnä vöcät | 9 Incölä präpērät |
| 10 Fīliä sälütäät | | |

Simple sentences

In the above activity you have been writing simple sentences. A **sentence** is a group of words conveying a complete idea. A simple sentence expresses a single complete idea.

The simple sentences in Activity 3 consist of a verb and a noun indicating the person or thing which performs the verb. This noun is called the **subject** of the verb. Thus in Activity 3 nauta is the subject of navigat.

The subject of the verb: nominative case

In Latin (as in English also) the subject of the verb goes into the **nominative** case. ('Case' comes from the Latin word *casus* – 'falling' and indicates what grammarians considered a deviation from the true form of the word.) There are **six cases** in Latin, which will be explained as you meet them. In reality they indicate the relation of nouns, adjectives, pronouns or participles to other words in a sentence.

All the nouns in Activity 3 are in the nominative case because they are each the subject of the verb; likewise all the nouns given in the list.

The object of the verb: accusative case

Consider these sentences:

The girl greets *her grandmother*.

The goat kicks *the farmer*.

The poet throws *a ball*.

Notice:

- a) The verbs are all transitive.
- b) The words in italics are all the **direct** or immediate **object** to which the action of the verb passes.

We have now added another element to our simple sentence so that it comprises:

- a) Subject b) Verb c) Object.

As yet our vocabulary is rather small and limited to particular groups of nouns and verbs.

Now look at the Latin version of these sentences:

Puella *aviam* salūtat.

Capra *āgricolam* calcat.

Poēta *pīlam* jactat.

It will be noted that the three words in italics, all **direct objects** of their respective verbs, have altered their spelling; they have added a letter -m. This is an example of what is meant by **inflection** as mentioned in the Introduction.

Here we have another case called the **accusative** into which the direct object of the verb is placed. It is distinguished from the nominative by the fact that it ends in -m.

Position of words

The usual order is subject, direct object and then the verb is at the end.

Summary

Nouns:

Nominative singular, e.g. pūella

Accusative singular, e.g. pūellam

Verbs:

Infinitive (present active), e.g. laudāre

3rd singular present indicative active, e.g. laudāt

Activity 4

Translate into English:

- 1 Pūellā vaccam spectāt.
- 2 Nautā agrīcolam vōcāt.
- 3 Filīā epistolam dāt.
- 4 Fēmīnā cāsam hābitāt.
- 5 Caprā silvam hābitāt.
- 6 Incolā sagittam portāt.
- 7 Bālaenā āquam hābitāt.
- 8 Āviā mēnsam portāt.
- 9 Agrīcolā gālēam servāt.
- 10 Pōētā cāsam aedīfīcāt.

When you have checked your answers, read these sentences aloud slowly and carefully, observing the pronunciation.

Plural forms

We are now ready to learn the **plural** form of the nominative and **accusative** and of the 3rd person singular of the present indicative active.

The nominative plural of pūellā is pūellāe.

The accusative plural of pūellā is pūellās.

The 3rd person plural of the present indicative active of natāre is natant. Notice that this, like the 3rd person singular, is formed on the base to which -nt is added. -nt – indicates the 3rd person plural – ‘they’. The long a of the base is shortened.

Summary

Nouns	Singular	Plural
Nom.	pūellā	pūellāe
Acc.	pūellam	pūellās

Verbs

3rd pers. sing. pres. ind. act. natat
 3rd pers. plur. pres. ind. act. Natant

Activity 5

(a) Give the nominative plural and the accusative singular and plural of the following nouns:

1 insūlā 2 pęcūnīa 3 fēmīnā 4 vespā 5 stēllā

(b) Give the 3rd person singular and plural of the present indicative active of:

1 portāre 2 stāre 3 servāre 4 saltāre 5 dāre

Here are the first three sentences of Activity 4 put into the plural:

- 1 Pūellae vaccās spectānt.
- 2 Nautāe āgricolās vōcant.
- 3 Fīliāe ēpistolās dānt.

Note them carefully.

Activity 6

Translate into English:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Fēmīnāe fābūlās narrant. | 2 Bālaenāe terram nōn (not) hābītant. |
| 3 Incolāe nautās sālūtant. | 4 Muscāe vespās exspectant. |
| 5 Āgricolāe vaccās amant. | 6 Caprāe incolās oppugnant. |
| 7 Poetāe nautās excitant. | 8 Pūellāe cōlumbās lībērant. |
| 9 Pōētāe āgricolās laudant. | 10 Cōlumbāe muscās spectant. |

Prepositions

These words are used with nouns and pronouns to show their connection with something else. (From the Latin verb *praepōnĕre* – to put first.) Hence **prepositions** almost always stand *before* the word dependent on them.

Some examples of English prepositions are: under, over, in, out of, against, across.

In Latin each preposition is always followed by a particular case. Some prepositions have different meanings with different cases.

There are many prepositions which take the accusative case.

Here is a list: read through it now, then come back and learn the words you are not sure of after you have done the activities.

ād – to, towards

antē – before, in front of

āpūd – at the house of, among

circum – around, about

contrā – opposite, facing against

extrā – outside, out of, beyond

intē – in the midst of, between

pēr – through, during (time)

post – after (time), behind (space)

prōpē – near (space)

proptē – on account of

sūb – under (denoting motion), close to

trāns – across, over

īn – (denoting movement) into, to, on to;

e.g. pēr silvam – through the wood; in fossam – into the ditch; antē

fēnestrās – in front of the windows

All the nouns are in the accusative case.

Activity 7

Translate the following prepositional phrases into English. They are called **phrases** because they are groups of words which don't make a complete sentence.

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1 Trāns vīam | 2 Prōpē iānūam | 3 Īn āquam |
| 4 Circum silvam | 5 Pēr fēnestram | 6 Antē portās |
| 7 Post cāsās | 8 Ād īnsūlās | 9 Proptē lācrīmās |
| 10 Contrā nautās | | |

Movement towards

Movement 'into' or 'towards' is always expressed in Latin by the accusative case. This is important and you will find in the Grammar reference section special sections devoted to the specific uses of each case.

Activity 8

The following sentences combine all the points of grammar so far covered.

Translate into English:

- 1 Vaccā trāns lūnam saltāt.
- 2 Fēminā ad iānūam prōpērāt.
- 3 Nautā ad īnsulam nāvīgāt.
- 4 Pōētā est āpūd āvīām.
- 5 Cāprā āgrīcolam in fossam calcāt.
- 6 Pūellae pēr silvam ambūlant.
- 7 Bālaenae per āquam nātant.
- 8 Pōētae extrā portās stant.
- 9 Vespae intēr rōsās cantant.
- 10 Āgrīcōlae hastās et (and) sāgittās in aquam iāctant.

The remaining persons of the verb

So far we have seen that the pronouns ‘he, she, it’ and ‘they’ are indicated by -t and -nt respectively at the end of the verb. The other persons behave similarly, each having their own distinctive letter or letters. Thus:

I = - ō	you (sing.) = -s	he, she, it = -t
we = -mūs	you (pl.) = -tīs	they = -nt

These letters are called **pronoun endings**.

The present indicative active

We are now ready to form the complete present tense. This is done by removing -re from the present infinitive active, which gives us the base (already explained) and adding to it the pronoun endings.

Thus the present indicative active (usually abbreviated to pres. ind. act.) of portare is:

Singular	Plural
1 port-ō I carry	1 portā-mūs
2 portā-s	2 portā-tīs
3 portā-t	3 portā-nt

The base is portā-.

Notice:

- the ‘a’ drops from the base in the 1st person singular only
- in the 3rd persons singular and plural, the long a of the base is shortened.

The first conjugation

The grouping together of all the forms of the verb is called a **conjugation** (from the Latin conjungere – to join together).

There are four conjugations of regular verbs in Latin and each one is distinguished by the ending of the present infinitive active. The verbs already given all belong to the first conjugation and the infinitive of this conjugation always ends in -āre. Dāre – is the only exception (already noted).

In the vocabulary provided with the course the number immediately following the verb indicates its conjugation, and you will see that the first part of the verb recorded is the 1st person singular of the present indicative active, which is followed by the present infinitive active. The other two parts will be explained later. Remember at this stage always to say those two parts to yourself when recalling a verb.

Activity 9

(a) Write out the present indicative active of:

1 laudāre 2 aedificāre 3 stāre 4 amāre 5 oppugnāre

(b) Translate into English:

1 Pīlam iactō.	2 Pīlās iactāamŭs.
3 Rōsam amō.	4 Rōsās amāmŭs.
5 Rīpam spectō.	6 Rīpās spectāmŭs.
7 Stellam spectās.	8 Stellās spectātis.
9 Fābŭlam narrās.	10 Fābŭlās narrātis.
11 Vaccam nōn amās.	12 Vaccās nōn amātis.

Reference books

1. It is important to have a good English dictionary, since you will need one constantly throughout the course. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* is good because it gives the origins of words.
2. For those who may feel the need of a reference book for English grammar, *English Grammar* by B. A. Phythian in the *Teach Yourself* series is excellent (published by Hodder & Stoughton). See also the suggestions in the Introduction.

Answers to activities

Activity 1

- | | |
|-------------|--------|
| 1 spectā- | 2 dā- |
| 3 lācrīmā- | 4 stā- |
| 5 aedīfīca- | |

Activity 2

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1 He calls | 2 He shows |
| 3 He likes | 4 He kicks |
| 5 He attacks | 6 lābōrāt |
| 7 nāvīgāt | 8 saltāt |
| 9 lācrīmāt | 10 hābītāt |

Activity 3

(in all cases 'the' or 'a' is correct)

- 1 The sailor is sailing (sails).
- 2 The poet is singing (sings).
- 3 Grandma is swimming.
- 4 The farmer is standing.
- 5 The she-goat kicks.
- 6 A cow is walking.
- 7 A wasp stings (wounds).
- 8 The woman is calling.
- 9 The inhabitant is hurrying.
- 10 The daughter greets.

Activity 4

- 1 The girl is looking at the cow.
- 2 The sailor is calling the farmer.
- 3 The daughter gives a letter.
- 4 A woman is living in the cottage.
- 5 The she-goat lives in the wood.
- 6 The inhabitant carries an arrow.
- 7 A whale lives in water.
- 8 Grandma is carrying the table.
- 9 The farmer protects his helmet.
- 10 The poet builds a cottage.

Activity 5

(a) *Nominative plural*

- 1 insūlae
- 2 pēcūnīae
- 3 fēmīnae

- 4 vespae
- 5 stēllae

<i>Accusative singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
īnsūlam	īnsūlas
pēcūnīam	pēcūnīas
fēmīnam	fēmīnās
vespam	vespās
stēllam	stēllās

(b)

- 1 portāt; portant
- 2 stāt; stant
- 3 servāt; servant
- 4 saltāt; saltant
- 5 dāt; dant

Activity 6

- 1 The women are telling stories.
- 2 Whales do not live on (inhabit) the land.
- 3 The inhabitants greet the sailors.
- 4 The flies are awaiting the wasps.
- 5 Farmers like cows.
- 6 The she-goats are attacking the inhabitants.
- 7 The poets awaken the sailors.
- 8 The girls free the doves.
- 9 Poets praise farmers.
- 10 The doves are looking at the flies.

Activity 7

- 1 Across the road.
- 2 Near the door.
- 3 Into the water.
- 4 Round the wood.
- 5 Through the window.
- 6 In front of the gates.
- 7 Behind the cottages.
- 8 Towards the islands.
- 9 On account of tears.
- 10 Against the sailors.

Activity 8

- 1 The cow leaps over the moon.
- 2 A woman is hurrying to the door.
- 3 The sailor is sailing to the island.
- 4 The poet is at the house of his grandmother.
- 5 The she-goat kicks the farmer into the ditch.
- 6 The girls are walking through the wood.
- 7 Whales are swimming through the water.
- 8 The poets stand outside the gates.

- 9 Wasps are buzzing (singing) amongst the roses.
 10 The farmers are throwing spears and arrows into the water.

Activity 9

(a)

- | | | | |
|---|-------------|---|------------|
| 1 | laudō | 4 | āmō |
| | laudās | | amās |
| | laudāt | | amāt |
| | laudāmūs | | amāmus |
| | laudātīs | | amātīs |
| | laudānt | | amānt |
| 2 | aedīfīcō | 5 | oppugnō |
| | aedīfīcās | | oppugnās |
| | aedīfīcāt | | oppugnāt |
| | aedīfīcāmūs | | oppugnāmus |
| | aedīfīcātīs | | oppugnātīs |
| | aedīfīcant | | oppugnānt |
| 3 | stō | | |
| | stās | | |
| | stāt | | |
| | stāmūs | | |
| | stātīs | | |
| | stānt | | |

(b)

- 1 I throw the ball.
- 2 We throw the balls.
- 3 I like the rose.
- 4 We like the roses.
- 5 I am looking at the river bank.
- 6 We watch the river banks.
- 7 You are looking at a star.
- 8 You (pl.) are watching the stars.
- 9 You are telling a story.
- 10 You (pl.) are telling stories.
- 11 You do not like the cow.
- 12 You (pl.) do not like cows.

Now that you have reached the end of the unit, it is a good idea to revise what you have learned by reading quickly through it again. It is now time to familiarise yourself with the words in the word list that you are not sure about. The assignment, when completed, should be sent to your tutor, together with any queries which you may have. If you can manage to do some of the assignment without looking anything up, so much the better, but it is not essential to do so at this stage.

What next?

We hope this sample has helped you to decide whether this course is right for you.

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